

I. Claim

1. A mail opener for use with a postage meter; said postage meter including printing means operable to print postal indicia on mail pieces;
- 5 said mail opener comprising a cutting device, the cutting device being movable between an operative position to open mail pieces and a retracted inoperative position in which the cutting device is maintained out of engagement with mail pieces; drive means operable to displace the cutting device between said operative position and said retracted inoperative position, said drive means being operable by said postage meter to maintain said cutting device in said retracted inoperative position when the printing means is operable to print postal indicia.
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- 15 2. A mail opener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the postage meter includes a print head movable between an operative printing position and a service position where printing cannot be effected; the drive means being operated by movement of the print head into the printing position to move the cutting device into the retracted inoperative position.
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- 25 3. A mail opener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the postage meter includes a first mail feed guide and said mail opener including a second mail feed guide extending in alignment with said first mail feed; said second mail feed guide being located to guide an edge of a mail piece in engagement with the cutting device when the cutting device is in the operative position and to prevent engagement of the cutting device by the mail piece when the cutting device is retracted into the inoperative position.
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- 35 4. A mail opener as claimed in claim 1 wherein the drive means is operable by the postage meter by mechanical interlocking means.

5. A mail opener as claimed in claim 4 wherein the cutting device is carried by a movable member; the interlocking means comprises a cam with which the movable member engages; and operation of the cam causes movement
5 of the cutting device between the operating position and the retracted inoperative position.

6. A mail opener as claimed in any claim 1 wherein the cutting device is a rotatably driven rotary blade.

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7. A mail opener as claimed claim 1 further comprising driven feed means operative to draw the mail pieces past the cutting device.

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8. A mail opener as claimed in claim 6 wherein the feed means comprises a driven feed roller and a pressure roller co-operating therewith.

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9. A mail opener as claimed in claim 7 including speed adjustment means operable to adjust the speed of the driven feed means.

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10. A mail opener as claimed in claim 2 wherein the drive means includes an electrical circuit responsive to movement of the print head carrier to operate the drive means to locate the cutting device in the retracted inoperative position in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing position.

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11. A mail opener as claimed in claim 10 wherein the postage meter includes radiation means to radiate a signal in response to the print head carrier moving to the operative printing position and the electrical circuit is responsive to the radiated signal.

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